



**Morning Alert - Wednesday, March 15, 2017**

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## HEADLINES

### Morning news

NHK and TBS gave top play to reports that Defense Minister Inada corrected on Tuesday a remark she made at the Diet on Monday in which she said she had never given Moritomo Gakuen legal advice or represented it in a trial. NHK said that while the opposition camp is demanding her resignation, the government and the ruling parties are defending Inada by saying she did not lie on purpose. NTV and Fuji TV led with the forecast for snow in the Kanto region today. TV Asahi gave top play to a report on Samurai Japan's victory over Cuba in a World Baseball Classic game on Tuesday.

Asahi, Mainichi, and Tokyo Shimbun gave top play to reports on Defense Minister Inada's retraction of her earlier remark on her link to Morimoto Gakuen, while Yomiuri and Nikkei led with reports on Toshiba's plan to withdraw from the overseas nuclear business by selling a majority of its stake in Westinghouse.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Secretary Tillerson to arrive in Japan today

Mainichi reported on the announcement on Tuesday by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Secretary of State Tillerson will hold separate meetings with Prime Minister Abe and Foreign Minister Kishida on Thursday. The paper speculated that the response to North Korea's missile launches and other provocations will be a major topic of discussion in the Secretary's meetings with the Japanese officials and that the United States and Japan will agree to strengthen their trilateral coordination with South Korea. The paper also conjectured that the Secretary will confirm that the U.S. and Japan will hold a 2+2 meeting of foreign and defense ministers at an early date. Kishida told a news conference on Tuesday: "The Secretary's visit to Tokyo is very timely in view of the security

environment in the region that has become increasingly tense. I would like to hold candid discussions with the Secretary.” The paper also wrote that the GOJ is hoping to hear from Secretary Tillerson about the progress made by the Trump administration in reviewing its policy toward North Korea. The paper also conjectured that the two officials will discuss the U.S.-Japan Economic Dialogue to be launched in April and reducing the base-hosting burden on Okinawa.

Nikkei added that the Secretary will seek coordination with Tokyo, Seoul, and Beijing against North Korea’s nuclear and missile threats. The daily conjectured that the USG chose Japan as the first country in Asia for Secretary Tillerson to visit so that the two nations can closely coordinate their policies toward the DPRK. The paper quoted an unnamed GOJ official as saying that Japan hopes to reconfirm the ironclad alliance with the United States through the visit. The paper also wrote that in addition to the schedule of the envisaged 2+2 meeting, the Secretary will probably discuss China’s advancement in the South and East China Seas and reconfirm the implementation of the plan to construct the Futenma Replacement Facility at Henoko.

### **William Hagerty to be appointed as next ambassador to Japan**

Sankei wrote from Washington that it learned from several sources connected to U.S.-Japan relations on Monday that the United States has obtained the GOJ’s approval for President Trump’s selection of William Hagerty as the next U.S. ambassador to Tokyo. The Trump administration plans to announce the nomination in the near future and Hagerty is expected to assume the post following Senate approval. The paper wrote that Hagerty lived in Japan for three years while working for a consultant firm and later worked to attract investment from Japan as an economic development advisor for the State of Tennessee.

### **Japan to provide \$26 million in aid to South Sudan and other nations**

Mainichi wrote that Foreign Minister Kishida told a news conference on Tuesday that Japan will provide \$26 million in emergency aid to fight famine in six African and Middle Eastern nations, including \$6 million for South Sudan. The aid for South Sudan comes after the recent GOJ announcement to withdraw SDF troops from the UN peacekeeping operations in the nation. The other recipients of the aid will be Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, and Yemen. Kishida stated that Japan will provide assistance swiftly in response to the international community’s extreme concern about the famine.

## **SECURITY**

### **U.S., Japan South Korea conduct missile defense exercise**

Yomiuri wrote that the MSDF announced on Tuesday that it conducted a joint exercise with the U.S. and ROK navies on Tuesday in waters near Japan and South Korea based on the scenario of ballistic missiles being launched by North Korea. The three nations shared information about their response to the simulated missile launch during the exercise. They held similar exercises three

times in June and November last year and January this year. Sankei ran a similar story on its front page.

### **MSDF ship to be dispatched to South China Sea**

Mainichi wrote that the MSDF will dispatch the Izumo, a helicopter carrier, to the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean from May through July. Noting that this is the first time for the MSDF to send the ship to the South China Sea, where China is constructing artificial islands, the paper speculated that the move is intended to send a warning to China. According to the Ministry of Defense, the ship will participate in an international fleet review to be held in Singapore in mid-May and conduct joint exercises with the U.S. navy.

## **POLITICS**

### **Inada apologizes for denying Moritomo link, opposition calls for her resignation**

All papers reported on Defense Minister Inada's Diet remarks on Tuesday, during which she corrected and apologized for her earlier statement denying her connection to Moritomo Gakuen. The lawyer-turned-politician stated on Monday that she has never given the school operator advice or represented it in a trial. However, she retracted the remark in a Lower House plenary session on Tuesday, admitting she represented Moritomo Gakuen as a lawyer at a civil court hearing in December 2004 before she became a lawmaker. Although the opposition parties called for Inada's resignation, she rejected the demand by saying she will continue to perform her role as defense minister with sincerity. Prime Minister Abe expressed his intention to keep her in her current post during his Diet remarks on Tuesday.

Asahi wrote that the prime minister is reluctant to dismiss Inada as defense minister because he would be held accountable for her appointment if he were to do so. The paper wrote that Inada, who has not been able to provide reliable explanations in Diet deliberations, will continue to be a "source of risk" for the Abe cabinet. Yomiuri wrote that criticism of Inada is growing in the ruling LDP.